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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/493,783	01/28/2000	James D. Schlick	KT-001AX	2657

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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3623	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

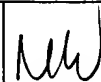|	**Application No.**	**Applicant(s)**
Office Action Summary	09/493,783	SCHLICK ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**	
	Susanna M. Diaz	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *12 December 2003 and 03 March 2004*.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL.**   2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-36,40,41,43-49,52-90,94,95,97-103 and 106-111* is/are pending in the application.

     4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-36,40,41,43-49,52-90,94,95,97-103 and 106-111* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

     a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

       1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

       2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

       3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

     * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3)☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6)☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   This Final Office action is responsive to Applicant's response filed December 12,

2003 and the amendment filed March 3, 2004.

Claims 35, 41, and 46 have been amended.

Claims 1-36, 40, 41, 43-49, 52-90, 94, 95, 97-103, and 106-111 are presented for

examination.

2.   The previously pending objection to the specification is withdrawn in response to

Applicant's amendment of the specification.

The previously pending objections to the claims are withdrawn in response to

Applicant's amendment of the claims.

The previously pending rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, 1st paragraph is

withdrawn in response to Applicant's arguments.

Response to Arguments

3.   Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-36, 40, 41, 43-49, 52-90, 94, 95,

97-103, and 106-111 have been considered but are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Decision Focus Software does not teach the "selection of

an in process analysis for modification by a user" (Page 21 of Applicant's response).

Applicant submits:

> ...Although a user appears to be able to make a copy of the
> file, *as stated on page 11 of DF Network, 'if you*
> *subsequently attempt to save that copy, you are not*
> *allowed to save the copy to the same name as the*

original file name." Thus the DF documents do not teach
that the knowledge base enables selection of an **in process**
analysis for modification by the user, as claimed in currently
pending claim 1, *because a user cannot modify an in
process analysis.* The ability to modify an in process
analysis is advantageous, among other reasons, for
collaborative analysis, i.e., an analysis by more than one
individual. (Pages 21-22 of Applicant's response)

The claim language does not preclude a user from making a copy of an in

process analysis and then making changes, which are to be saved under a different file

name. As recited in claim 1, for example, a user of Decision Focus Software can select

an in process analysis (i.e., a Decision Focus Software user can make a copy of a

"worksheet file that is already opened by someone else running Decision Focus," page

11 of "Decision Focus Software Network Version 1.0 User's Guide"). The user can then

modify the copied file and save it under a different file name in order to prevent

overwriting of someone else's work (page 11 of "Decision Focus Software Network

Version 1.0 User's Guide"). The claim language does not specify how a modification to

an in process analysis is saved (e.g., saved under a different file name, overwrites the

original in process analysis, etc.). Applicant is arguing limitations that are not explicitly

recited in the claims; therefore, said argument is not persuasive.

Applicant asserts that "*the August 14, 2003 Office Action does not point to where*

in the cited documents one can find a motivation or suggestion to combine the cited

documents to achieve the invention claimed in currently pending claim 1" (page 24 of

Applicant's response). However, Applicant fails to address Examiner's combination of

Decision Focus Software and Lee as a whole. For example, Applicant does not

address Examiner's preface to the teachings of Lee:

> Regarding claims 4, 35, and 36, Decision Focus® Software
> comes in a networked version in which worksheet files can
> be saved on a network server and shared among various
> users ("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0
> User's Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11). Broadly speaking, a
> "knowledge base" merely refers to a collection of knowledge,
> i.e., data; therefore, the collection of these worksheet files
> serves as a "knowledge base." Decision Focus® Software
> does not expressly teach that these centrally stored
> worksheet files are linked to one another in a large database
> (which is what would be suggested by placing the
> information found in such files in a "knowledge base");
> however, as discussed above, various users can access the
> worksheet files of other people for their personal use.

Clearly, the teachings of Decision Focus Software in conjunction with those of

Lee yield not only the necessary motivation to combine the teachings of both

references, but also the claimed invention as a whole. For example, as explained in the

art rejection, Decision Focus Software comes in a networked version that allows users

to share worksheet files with one another. This furthers the sharing of knowledge

among users. Lee merely fills in the blanks regarding the use of normalized databases

as opposed to non-normalized ones, which Examiner asserts is a very old and well-

known concept in the art of database management.

Applicant also argues that Lee teaches away from implementing a normalized

database with Decision Focus Software:

> Thus, reading the Lee document, one would not be
> motivated to add a central relational database to the subject
> matter of the DF documents to achieve the claimed invention
> because of the effort required (as described in the Lee

document) to develop and maintain a relational database. In other words, the Lee document teaches that relational database development and maintenance are complicated processes requiring effort and thought. Thus, the Lee document teaches away from adding a central relational database to a networked decision making system because one would need a compelling reason to create and maintain a central relationship database and because the Lee document does not appear to even discuss adding a central database to a pre-existing networked system. (Page 25 of Applicant's response)

First, as explained above and in the art rejection, the networked version of

Decision Focus Software allows users to share worksheet files with one another.

Broadly speaking, a "knowledge base" merely refers to a collection of knowledge, i.e.,

data; therefore, the collection of these worksheet files serves as a "knowledge base."

Lee states that normalization yields the benefits of "reduced anomalies, storage

requirements, and transaction response times" (abstract). Applicant's assertion that

implementing a normalized database is very complex and, therefore, one of ordinary

skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention would not have been motivated to

incorporate one into the Decision Focus Software ignores the important benefits of

choosing to implement such a database. Whether or not making this modification (e.g.,

adding a normalized database) to Decision Focus Software would pose a daunting task,

one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention would not overlook

these benefits of "reduced anomalies, storage requirements, and transaction response

times" (abstract). For example, users in a network are often concerned with potential

anomalies in data storage and retrieval, lack of storage/overwhelming storage

requirements, and data storage and retrieval response times. The users of the

networked version of Decision Focus Software are likely no different and, therefore, the

Examiner maintains that one of ordinary skill in the art would indeed have been

motivated and found it obvious to incorporate a normalized database with Decision

Focus Software for the reasons presented in Lee in light of the goals of the networked

version of Decision Focus Software, as discussed in the art rejection.

On pages 26-31 of Applicant's response, Applicant presents similar arguments

for claims 4 and 58 as those presented for claims 1-3 above. The same responses from

Examiner apply.

Applicant requests more explanation regarding the rejection of claim 30 (pages

31-32 of Applicant's response). As stated in the art rejection, the limitation "wherein the

action tracking process further includes eliciting, storing, retrieving, and presenting

process data from at least one of the other processes in addition to the associated

actions" (claim 30) is addressed on pages 11-32 of "Decision Focus® Software User's

Guide (Version 1.0)." Each of the four recited analyses in steps (a)-(d) can be elicited,

stored, retrieved, and presented (see discussion of the specific steps (a)-(d) in the art

rejection, which has not been argued by Applicant). Therefore, a user has access to

any and all of the four recited analyses and related worksheets.

Applicant broadly challenges the Official Notice statements made in relation to

claims 9-15, "The Applicants assert that the subject matter of claims 8-16 and 43-45 is

not old and well-known in the relevant art(s)." (Page 32 of Applicant's response) It is

not clear whether Applicant is challenging the validity of the Official Notice statements

themselves or the motivation to combine them with the Decision Focus Software and

Lee references. Furthermore, Applicant's blanket challenge amounts to nothing more than an unsupported challenge and is therefore insufficient to switch the burden back to the Examiner to cite supporting references (MPEP 2144.03) and/or present further arguments in support of the motivation to combine teachings.

In conclusion, Applicant's arguments are not persuasive and the art rejection is maintained.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5.   Claims 1-36, 40, 41, 43-49, 52-90, 94, 95, 97-103, and 106-111 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Decision Focus® Software, as disclosed in the following references submitted by Applicant:

"Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)," copyright 1995;

"Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0 User's Guide," copyright 1995;

Print-outs of On-Screen Worksheets from Decision Focus® Software; and

Screenshots (Figs. 1-24) from Decision Focus® Software (Version 1.0)

in view of Lee ("Justifying Database Normalization: A Cost/Benefit Model").

Decision Focus® Software discloses a process for eliciting, processing, storing, and displaying information concerning a complex business situation, the process comprising:

[Claim 4]   employing **at least one** of *(i.e., anywhere from one to four of processes 'a' through 'd' need be employed)*:

a) a situation appraisal process to elicit, store, retrieve and present situation data, the situation data including (i) concerns about the situation and respective attributes of the concerns, the attributes of each concern including a relative priority and a process to be used for further analysis, and (ii) actions to be taken to address the concerns ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 11-15);

b) a problem analysis process to elicit, store, retrieve and present problem data including an object of a problem in the situation and attributes of the object, the attributes including a deviation, possible causes, actions to be taken to confirm a true case, a confirmed true cause, and actions to be taken to address the confirmed true cause ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 17-25);

c) a decision analysis process to elicit, store, retrieve and present decision data, the decision data including (1) objectives of a decision regarding the situation and respective attributes of the objectives, the attributes of each objective including an indication of relative importance and at least one alternative, (ii) for each alternative a set of risks and respective probabilities and consequences, (iii) a final decision

regarding alternatives to be pursued, and (iv) actions to be taken to implement the final

decision ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 27-32); and

d) a potential side effect analysis process to elicit, store, and present

potential side effect data, the side effect data including potential side effects of an action

to be taken to address the situation and respective attributes of the potential side

effects, the attributes of each potential side effect including a likely cause, actions to be

taken to influence the likelihood of occurrence of the side effect, and actions to be taken

in the event of occurrence of the side effect ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide

(Version 1.0)": Page 32 -- "Side effects" and "risks" are deemed to be synonymous); and

employing an action tracker process to (i) retrieve and present actions from the

other processes, and (ii) to elicit, store, retrieve and present attributes of the actions, the

attributes of each action including a responsible person, a deadline, and status

("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 33-35);

wherein each process employs a corresponding set of graphical user interface

(GUI) process screens in eliciting data from and presenting data to a user ("Decision

Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 11-35);

[Claim 5]   wherein each analysis process further includes providing user

performance support ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 8,

33);

[Claim 6]   wherein providing user performance support includes coaching the user

by providing explanations and suggestions about the data being elicited upon an

indication by the user that such coaching is desired ("Decision Focus® Software User's

Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 8, 33);

[Claim 17]   wherein each analysis process is usable in either a worksheet mode or an

interview mode, each mode being associated with a different set of the GUI process

screens, the interview mode GUI process screens containing specific questions to elicit

a proper type of data from a user ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version

1.0)": Page 8 -- Upon choosing the "Help" option, a list of process questions is displayed

in a window that remains on top of the worksheets. The user can enter data in either

mode);

[Claim 18]   wherein the interview mode GUI process screens include transition

screens each summarizing a respective set of process steps to be performed in an

immediately-following set of GUI process screens ("Decision Focus® Software User's

Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 11-37; Screenshots (Figs. 1-24) from Decision Focus®

Software (Version 1.0));

[Claim 19]   wherein the interview mode GUI process screens include summary

screens each summarizing a respective set of process steps performed and the data

entered in an immediately-preceding set of GUI process screens ("Decision Focus®

Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 11-37; Screenshots (Figs. 1-24) from

Decision Focus® Software (Version 1.0));

[Claim 20]   further operative to toggle between worksheet mode and interview mode

upon demand ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Page 8 -- Upon

choosing the "Help" option, a list of process questions is displayed in a window that remains on top of the worksheets. The user can enter data in either mode);

[Claim 21]   wherein the attributes for each concern included in the situation data further include seriousness, urgency, and growth of the concern ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Page 13);

[Claim 22]   wherein the attributes of each object included in the problem data further include a location and a date pertaining to a deviation thereof ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 18-20);

[Claim 23]   wherein the attributes of each object included in the problem data further include "is" and "is not" descriptions ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 18-20);

[Claim 24]   wherein the attributes of each object further include distinctions and changes ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 21-22);

[Claim 25]   wherein the attributes of each object included in the problem data further include conditions and assumptions associated with the problem causes ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 17-25);

[Claim 26]   wherein the indication of relative importance of each objective included in the decision data includes a classification as either a "must" or a "want" and a weight for each objective classified as a "want" ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 28-29);

[Claim 27]   wherein the attributes of at least one objective include multiple alternatives for pursuing the objective, and wherein the decision analysis process further includes

ranking the alternatives according to desirability in pursuing the objective ("Decision

Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 30-31);

[Claim 28]   wherein the side effect analysis process is a potential problem analysis

process, the side effect data is problem data, the potential side effects are potential

problems, the likelihood-influencing actions for each potential problem are preventative

actions to reduce the likelihood of occurrences, and the event-occurrence actions for

each potential problem are contingent actions to diminish the effect of occurrence

("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 32-36);

[Claim 29]   wherein the side effect analysis process is a potential opportunity analysis

process, the side effect data is opportunity data, the potential side effects are potential

opportunities, the likelihood-influencing actions for each potential opportunity are

promoting actions to increase the likelihood of occurrence, and the event-occurrence

actions for each potential opportunity are capitalizing actions to enhance the effect of

occurrence ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 32-36);

[Claim 30]   wherein the action tracking process further includes eliciting, storing,

retrieving, and presenting process data from at least one of the other processes in

addition to the associated actions ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version

1.0)": Pages 11-32);

[Claim 31]   wherein the process data includes concerns from the situation appraisal

process ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 11-15);

[Claim 32]   wherein the process data includes objects from the problems analysis

process ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 17-25);

[Claim 33]   wherein the process data includes decisions from the decision analysis

process ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 27-32);

[Claim 34]   wherein the process data includes potential side effects from the potential

side effect analysis process ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)":

Page 32 -- "Side effects" and "risks" are deemed to be synonymous);

[Claim 40]   wherein each analysis process further includes a notes cell used to enter

clarifying notes ("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 11-32);

[Claim 41]   further operative to generate reports containing selected portions of the

data concerning the complex business situation ("Decision Focus® Software User's

Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 15, 25, 32, 35);

[Claim 52]   wherein each analysis process further includes querying the knowledge

base to draw upon knowledge obtained from prior performances of the processes

("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0 User's Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11 -- The

worksheet files can be saved on a network server and shared among various users);

[Claim 54]   further including specifying an individual responsible for a specified task

("Decision Focus® Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)": Pages 33-35);

[Claim 55]   wherein multiple users are able to access the data in the knowledge base

concerning the complex business situation ("Decision Focus® Software Network

Version 1.0 User's Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11 -- The worksheet files can be saved on a

network server and shared among various users);

[Claim 56]   wherein a user is able to selectively incorporate data provided by other

users into the knowledge base in association with the complex business situation (The

networked version of Decision Focus® Software allows a user to access data currently

being used by another person. The user then makes a copy of the desired file so that

he/she does not overwrite someone else's work, thereby implying that the user can

modify the data in the copied file ("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0

User's Guide": Page 11));

[Claim 57] wherein (i) multiple users are able to copy data from the knowledge base

for respective individual use, and (ii) the multiple users are able to store respective

separate copies of the data in the knowledge base ("Decision Focus® Software Network

Version 1.0 User's Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11 -- The worksheet files can be saved on a

network server and shared among various users).

Regarding claims 4, 35, and 36, Decision Focus® Software comes in a

networked version in which worksheet files can be saved on a network server and

shared among various users ("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0 User's

Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11). Broadly speaking, a "knowledge base" merely refers to a

collection of knowledge, i.e., data; therefore, the collection of these worksheet files

serves as a "knowledge base." Decision Focus® Software does not expressly teach

that these centrally stored worksheet files are linked to one another in a large database

(which is what would be suggested by placing the information found in such files in a

"knowledge base"); however, as discussed above, various users can access the

worksheet files of other people for their personal use. Lee discusses the benefits

("reduced anomalies, storage requirements, and transaction response time") of utilizing

normalized databases "in information systems development processes to group data

into well-refined structures." Therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been

obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to centrally

store the data from Decision Focus® Software's collective worksheet files in a

"knowledge base" (in the stricter sense of a "knowledge base" as a database *per se* of

information), such as a normalized database, in order to facilitate access to all of the

collected worksheet files by various networked users through keyword searches in order

to provide quick access to data in a manner that reduces anomalies, minimizes storage

requirements, and improves transaction response time (as taught by Lee). As per claim

35, a normalized database is a type of knowledge base that is adapted for structured

storage and retrieval of keywords by the processes, and wherein each process further

includes (i) assisting the user in identifying keywords in the elicited data, (ii) storing the

identified keywords in the knowledge base, and (iii) executing keyword searches of the

knowledge base upon the user's demand. Therefore, it would have been obvious to

one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to implement the

details of a normalized database, as set forth in claim 35, with Decision Focus®

Software in order to facilitate access to all of the collected worksheet files by various

networked users through keyword searches in order to provide quick access to data in a

manner that reduces anomalies, minimizes storage requirements, and improves

transaction response time (as taught by Lee). Furthermore, the Examiner asserts that

the Decision Focus® Software implemented with a normalized database would

necessarily entail the limitation, "wherein the GUI process screens contain cells capable

of receiving user-entered data and capable of being associated with complex data

objects stored in the knowledge base, and wherein each process further includes

receiving such user-entered data into the cells and associating such complex data

objects with the cells as directed by the user" (as per claim 36).

Regarding claims 7 and 8, Decision Focus® Software teaches the provision of

user performance support (as discussed above); however, it does not expressly

disclose that such user performance support includes providing examples to the user

regarding the data being elicited upon an indication by the user that such providing of

examples is desired (claim 7) or providing pop-up definitions of highlighted terms

appearing on the GUI process screens in response to the user's selection thereof (claim

8). However, Official Notice is taken that both the use of examples and the use of pop-

up definitions of terms in question in a GUI format to assist a user in filling out requested

information are old and well-known in the art. As a matter of fact, the "Decision Focus®

Software User's Guide (Version 1.0)" itself provides definitions of each of its analysis

processes and corresponding examples to assist a user in using the software (see

pages 11, 17, 27, and 33); there is just no explicit teaching that these definitions and

examples are integrated directly into the software. Providing this user help within the

software itself creates a more convenient and user-friendly environment in which a user

can be guided through the form-filling process without additionally having to flip through

paper manuals. In light of the fact that the "Decision Focus® Software User's Guide

(Version 1.0)" already provides examples and definitions on paper, the Examiner

asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

Applicant's invention to enhance Decision Focus® Software's user performance support

to include providing examples to the user regarding the data being elicited upon an

indication by the user that such providing of examples is desired (claim 7) or providing

pop-up definitions of highlighted terms appearing on the GUI process screens in

response to the user's selection thereof (claim 8) in order to create a more convenient

and user-friendly environment in which a user can be guided through the form-filling

process without additionally having to flip through paper manuals.

Regarding claims 9-15, Decision Focus® Software fails to explicitly teach the

implementation of proofreading, completion checking, and error correction-type

features. However, Official Notice is taken that the process of checking to screen and

filter data input by a user with the motivation of ensuring the completeness and

correctness of the entered data (as per claim 9) is old and well-known in the art of form

filling. Official Notice is also taken that, for the same reasons (i.e., to ensure the

completeness and correctness of entered data), it is old and well-known in the art of

form filling to perform the following types of proofreading/completion checking/error

correction: check misstated information to detect skipped steps, unsound data, and

incomplete analysis (claim 10); check common pitfalls to advise the user of pitfalls that

can be encountered as a result of impreciseness in the entered data (claim 11); sharpen

to successively refine entered data considered to be critical to proper analysis (claim

12); notify the user upon detection of incomplete or incorrect data (claim 13); notify the

user by displaying a message to the user as the user attempts to advance to a

succeeding GUI process screen (claim 14); and notify the user by displaying a message

to the user immediately upon detection of the incomplete or incorrect data (claim 15).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

Applicant's invention to implement the various proofreading, completion checking, and

error correction-type features recited in claims 9-15 with Decision Focus® Software in

order to facilitate the entry of complete and accurate data to ensure the most precise

and meaningful problem analysis possible.

Regarding claim 16, Decision Focus® Software fails to explicitly teach the

disabling of process checking at the request of the user; however, Official Notice is

taken that it is old and well-known in the art to disable automated

proofreading/completion checking/error correction programs in order to allow a user to

enter data without distractions from error messages, especially when the user knows

he/she is properly entering data although error messages are generated. For example,

it is often prudent for a user to disable the spell check feature of a word processing

program when the user is writing a paper in a foreign language to prevent unnecessary

disturbances, such as erroneously underlined "spelling errors" all over the page.

Therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill

in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to disable the process checking features of

the modified Decision Focus® Software (addressed in the rejection of claims 9-15

above) at the request of the user in order to allow a user to enter data without

distractions from error messages, especially when the user knows he/she is properly

entering data although error messages are generated.

Regarding claims 43-45, Decision Focus® Software does not expressly teach the generation and sending of electronic mail messages containing process data to both internal (i.e., users of the computer program) and external (i.e., non-users of the computer program) recipients. However, Official Notice is taken that it is old and well-known in the art of communications to e-mail company data to both internal and external recipients. This enables quick and efficient decision making and implementation of the resulting decisions. Therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to adapt Decision Focus® Software to be further operative to generate electronic mail messages containing actions from one or more of the processes and to send the mail messages to one or more other users of the computer program (claim 43), to automatically initiate the generating and sending of the electronic mail messages (claim 44) and to send the electronic mail messages to recipients who are not users of the computer program (claim 45) in order to enable quick and efficient decision making and implementation of the resulting decisions.

Regarding claims 46-49 and 53, Decision Focus® Software comes in a networked version in which worksheet files can be saved on a network server and shared among various users ("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0 User's Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11). In other words, Decision Focus® Software teaches the steps of selecting a previously entered action file for at least one of review and update, the action file selected from action files on user's systems across a network so as to achieve enterprisewide monitoring of the various process screen sequences being

undertaken, selecting a concern from the concerns stored in the selected action file, and displaying actions entered for the selected concern ("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0 User's Guide": Pages 5, 10, 11), as per claim 46. Decision Focus® Software does not expressly teach the ability to sort the actions by various criteria; however, the Decision Focus® Software implemented with a normalized database would necessarily entail database record sorting and querying capabilities since such capabilities are deemed inherent to a normalized database. These capabilities provide a user with means to quickly and conveniently locate records of interest. As discussed above, the Decision Focus® Software stores data regarding when, who, and status attributes; therefore, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to incorporate with the Decision Focus® Software the ability to sort the actions according to specified sort criteria (claim 46), wherein the actions are sorted and presented by the when attribute (claim 47), wherein the actions are sorted and presented by the who attribute (claim 48), wherein the actions are sorted and presented by the status attribute (claim 49), and wherein the querying includes retrieving previously-created queries from the knowledge base and querying the knowledge base therewith (claim 53) in order to provide a user with means to quickly and conveniently locate records of interest.

[Claims 58-90, 94, 95, 97-103, 106-111] Claims 58-90, 94, 95, 97-103, and 106-111 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims 4-36, 40, 41, 43-49, and 52-57 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

[Claims 1-3] Claims 1-3 recite limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims

4-36, 40, 41, 43-49, and 52-57 above; therefore, the same rejection applies.

Furthermore, regarding the limitation "said knowledge base enabling selection of

an in process analysis for modification by a user" (as recited in claims 1-3), the

networked version of Decision Focus® Software allows a user to access data currently

being used by another person. The user then makes a copy of the desired file so that

he/she does not overwrite someone else's work, thereby implying that the user can

modify the data in the copied file ("Decision Focus® Software Network Version 1.0

User's Guide": Page 11).

Conclusion

6.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (703) 305-

1337. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (703) 305-9643.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or

proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is

(703)308-1113.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

or faxed to:

(703)305-7687   [Official communications; including
                        After Final communications labeled
                        "Box AF"]

(703)746-7048   [Informal/Draft communications, labeled
                        "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal
Drive, Arlington, VA, 22202, 7th floor receptionist.

Susanna Diaz

Susanna M. Diaz
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3623
May 13, 2004